

BALLARAT FIELD NATURALIST'S CLUB

EXCURSION/NEWS SHEET - FEBRUARY 1978.

President:	Mr. G. Binns	Ph. 323670
Vice-Pres:	Mr. L. Fink	861319
Secretary:	Miss H. Burgess	312210
Treasurer:	Mr. S. Reynolds	327721

Meetings held at the School of Mines, Lydiard St. Sth., first Friday of each month, at 8 p.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER

MEETING: 3rd February - Member's Night. Various subjects.

MEETING: 3rd March - Annual Meeting. Speaker Mr. J. Brisbane.

EXCURSION 5th February- Ocean Grove Native Reserve.
Further particulars in this issue.

EXCURSION 5th March- Canadian Forest, afternoon departure.

B.R.A.C.E. LECTURE PROGRAMME: 18th February. Mr. Howard Jarman - Bird Watching. "Brace" Building, East St. at 8 p.m. Excursion Sunday 19th February.

PHOTOFLORA '78: To be held at the North Technical School Hall on Monday 20th March, at 8 p.m.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMP-OUT CASTLEMAINE-VAUGHAN SPRINGS AREA. 22/23rd April. Particulars of caravan parks, hotels, motels etc. available from committee members.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS:

Members are reminded that under our constitution written nominations, including seconder, for all vacant positions on the executive committee should be given to the Secretary by the end of the February meeting. Committee consists of 10 members, including President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

25th ANNIVERSARY - DEC. '77 MEETING.

The foundation President of B.F.N.C., Mr. Alan Sonsee and foundation Secretary Mr. Jack Wheeler, as well as former members, members from other Field Naturalists' Club centres, Bird Observer's Club and invited guests were welcomed by the President, Mr. Greg. Binns at the Silver Jubilee Celebration on 2nd December.

Mr. Sonsee "launched" a small book on the club's activities over the past 25 years and said that people nowadays were more aware of conservation, ecology and the need to preserve our bushland heritage.

Miss Mary White of Anglesea cut an anniversary cake, made and beautifully decorated in the style of a three dimensional wildflower garden by Miss Helen Burgess. A very happy evening was enjoyed by all meeting old friends and reminiscing.

"BREEDING BIRDS OF PORT PHILLIP BAY."

The above was the title chosen for an illustrated address given by Mr. Jack Wheeler on the occasion of the Club's 25th Anniversary Celebrations.

Mr. Wheeler first remarked on the fine contribution given to the Club by the late Mr. Bob Smith and the late Mrs. Maude Smith, Miss O. Herbert, Stella and Ted. Bedggood; Betty and Laurie Millar and Ivan Tiley in the Mt. Cole area. He said 20,000 copies of his book "The Care of Sick and Injured and Orphaned Native Birds and Animals" had been printed and distributed, and more were being produced.

Mr. Wheeler showed slides of various injured birds and animals he had treated and rehabilitated, among them being a koala, a swan, penguins, baby kangaroos. Six miles due east of Queenscliff on the platform of the pilot light in Pt. Phillip Bay there are no less than 23 gannets nests, a remarkable sight, with one egg in each. Some other birds shown were white faced storm petrel, of which there are 1,000 breeding pair; short-tailed shear-

water, terns, curlew, sand pipers, red-capped dotterel, pied oystercatcher, red-necked avocet, to name a few. An excellent collection of slides, greatly appreciated by all who had the privilege of seeing them.

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP.

A large number of members and friends wandered through the Nature Reserve at Linton on 4th December, before making their way to the "B.O.C." block "Clarkedale", also at Linton. There we met up with invited guests and enjoyed tea, and the companionship of fellow naturalists. The native plants and trees are growing well at "Clarkedale" and there were many bird species noted.

B.F.N.C. GUIDELINES FOR CLUB ACTIVITIES.

Visitors and intending members are welcome to attend our excursions, but are asked to remember that the Club's aim is to protect native flora and fauna, as well as studying them.

Attention is drawn to the regulations of the Forests Commission and other Government Departments prohibiting the picking of wildflowers, unless a licence is held (obtainable from the Forests Commission). The picking of orchids is completely forbidden.

Children are most welcome to attend as our future lies with our younger members.

Those engaged in birdwatching should keep behind the leader. If the leader holds up his hand, they should keep quite still and silent - then move up quietly when he indicates. Children are the responsibility of the adults who accompany them.

When travelling in convoy, drivers are asked to keep a safe distance between cars and to keep both the car ahead and the car behind in sight. Make sure you can recognise them. If the car behind stops, you are asked to stop also: this will halt the convoy. The driver may be in difficulties, or have missed a turnoff, or may have found something of particular interest.

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN ENFIELD FOREST PARK.

Early in January 1978 the International Orienteering Championships were held in Ballarat. One of the five courses was in the Enfield Forest Park, starting near the radio beacon, and finishing near the Little Hard Hills Hotel, a distance of 9 km. Six hundred and forty orienteers from ten different countries took part in the competitions, their ages ranging from eight to seventy years.

Their reaction to Australia and Enfield was one of delight. Of particular interest were the evergreen fully leaved vegetation, the browned off grass and the different habitats so close to Ballarat. The four remaining courses were at Bungai, three in the Lal Lal district and one at Canadian.

Many kangaroos and wallabies were observed at Enfield in the early morning.

New maps giving greater details are now being prepared by the Ballarat and Melbourne Orienteering groups.

The Forest Commission has just finished a new walking track. I hope all members take advantage of it and are able to walk the circuit and perhaps observe something new.

The track enters the bush on the left hand side of the road at the first post on a culvert north of the two bridges at Misery Creek. It winds its way along Long Gully, then turns north, then east, crossing the Misery Creek Road and returning to opposite the starting point at the two bridges.

Elbow orchids (*Spiculaea huntiana*), Hyacinth orchids (*Dipodium punctatum*), and *Cryptostylis subulata* (large tongue orchids) are now blooming in the Enfield Forest.

S. Bedggood.

EXCURSION TO OCEAN GROVE - 5th February - Leaving Crockers corner at 9.30 a.m. For those not desirous of travelling in convoy, members will meet at 10.45 a.m. at the toilet block at Johnson Park in Geelong. This is behind the City Hall, in Little Malop St., across from the railway station.

If banded stilts are still about at Pt. Henry, we proceed to there, then on to the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, to lunch at 12.30. (No barbeques available.) Swimming later if desired.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY !!

Would any member or friend who would like the news sheet posted to them a few days before the meetings, please let Mrs. B. Gray, 501 Ligar St., Ballarat, have \$2.00, to cover postage for the eleven issues for the year?

The donation box on market table is for voluntary donations to cover cost of postage of news sheet to eight other Field Naturalist's Clubs. Thank you! (Proceeds of table go to "Linton Block".)

Club membership fees are due at the Annual Meeting on 5th March. \$1.50 per member, 50c. students.

OUTBACK TOURS.

Three men of the land from the Beaufort district are starting a venture others have merely dreamed of.. genuine outback safaris to remote places never mentioned on the usual tour itineraries.

Chris Hedges, Laurie Millar and Norman Reid developed a passion for the unique beauty, wildlife, history and solitude of Central Australia during recent excursions. They were impressed with the wild, everchanging and colorful terrain, yet disillusioned by the strict schedules and lack of freedom of regular route bus tours. So the three men decided to investigate providing exclusive holidays truly "away from it all."

The partners have formed Austrack, a firm which will commence inland safaris in March 1978, using three Toyota Landcruisers equipped with air conditioning,

refrigeration and comfortable bucket seats. Four passengers, plus one of the partners as drivers, will occupy each vehicle, travelling in convoy.

The paying safari guests will find everything provided - meals, tents, pillows and sleeping bags, if required. Unlike the regular buses, they will journey far off the beaten track and stop wherever any guest has a particular interest. Trips will usually occupy 20 days and travel as far as Boulia in Western Queensland and Ayers Rock. During mid-year school holidays, shorter 14-day tours are planned. But Austrack will place emphasis on special tours which may be arranged to suit groups with special interests, such as bird observers, camera clubs and naturalists.

After several excursions, a major trial of the venture was undertaken last November. Two Landcruisers carrying three passengers each left Beaufort and covered 6500 kilometres. A most comprehensive route was taken.

The tourists reported the outback at present is an "eye-opener", particularly the Channel Country which is very green and is supporting extensive numbers of birds and other wildlife.

Further information is available from all offices of Dalgety Travel, which has a brochure in final stages of preparation.

BIRD OBSERVER'S CLUB HEADQUARTERS.

The new address of the above club is:-

B.O.C. Centre,

183 Springvale Road,

Nunawading.

(P.O. Box 185, Nunawading, 3131.)

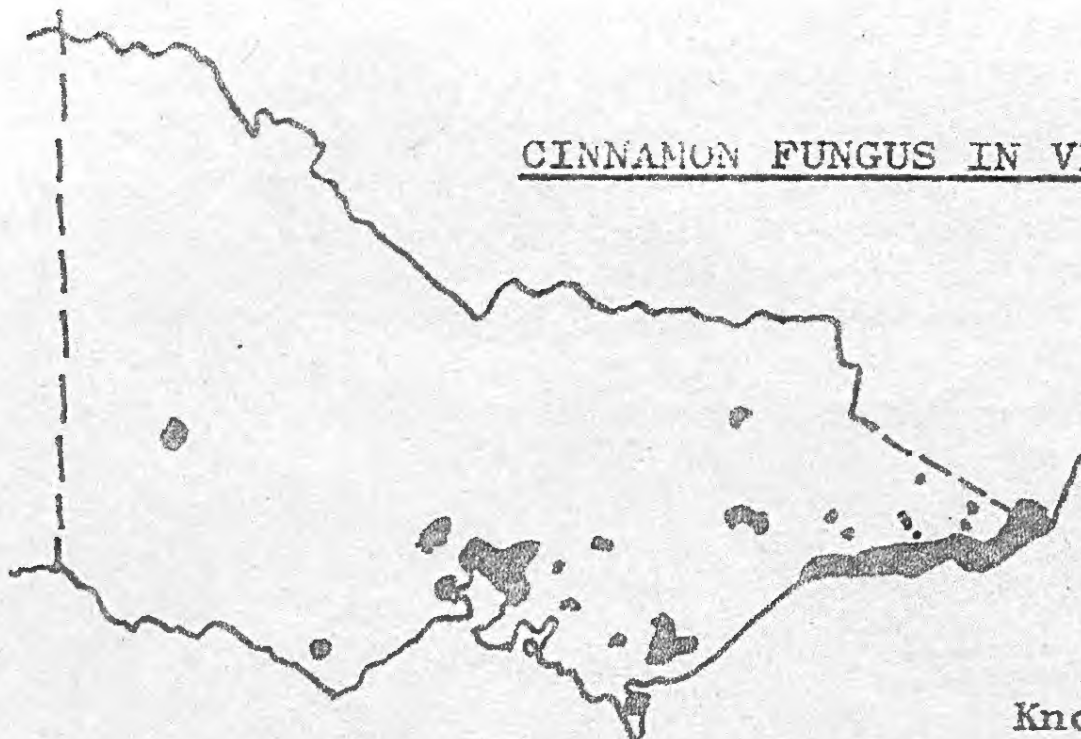
Phone 8775342.

Open 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. week days. 6 - 9 p.m. Fridays.

Saturdays 9 a.m. - 12 noon.

Available to the public - Bird Observer's Books, badges, posters, books.

CINNAMON FUNGUS IN VICTORIA



Known Distribution

Cinnamon Fungus (Phytophthora cinnamoni), causes root-rot which in turn results in the disease known as "dieback". The Fungus lives in the soil and invades, then feeds on, the fine roots of many different kinds of plant. Unlike most fungal pests, which usually have only one or a few types of host, this fungus is known to attack 728 species of plant, including more than 400 native Australian species. It is the ability to invade and kill such a wide range of plants which makes the organism of so much more concern than other introduced fungal pests.

The fine roots of a plant enable it to extract moisture and nutrients from the soil. Infected plants have difficulty in absorbing enough water through their remaining roots, particularly in summer time when the soil is dry, and so they may die.

Plants vary widely in their tolerance to the fungus but most native plants which have been tested are susceptible, viz; Austral Grass-tree, many eucalypts such as stringbarks, peppermints, Silvertop Ash, Mountain Ash, Banksias, hakeas, Isopogon, most pea-flowers, most heaths, some tea-trees, some acacias, some casuarinas; also Cypress, Radiata Pine, pineapples, avocados, peaches, plums, walnuts, rhododendrons and azaleas. Intermediate tolerance; Manna Gum, Sugar Gum, Mtn. Grey Gum, Vic. Blue Gum, Martime Pine., Loblolly Pine. Tolerant: Grasses, Sedges, Rushes, River Red Gum. and Mahogany Gum.

In Victoria, all fresh outbreaks have been traced

to roadbuilding and other earthmoving activities. Soil carried on vehicles, bulldozers, around potted shrubs and even on hikers' boots can transmit the disease for many miles. Contaminated gravel pits have been a major method of spread.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? Presence of the Cinnamon Fungus in Victoria has given a new depth of meaning to old prohibitions about digging up wildflowers in the bush, whether in national parks or elsewhere. A plant taken back to the suburbs from a diseased site could spell a strange death to prized garden shrubs. Moreover, any soil thrown out en route in another part of the forest could be responsible for destruction of untold acres.

When cars are driven off from roads, they frighten animals, damage vegetation, pollute the air, spread weeds and cause soil erosion. Now there is added reason for motorists and bike riders to remain on prepared tracks - a vehicle driven off-road could leave a trail of fungus-caused destruction behind it.

Even hikers should be careful. The chances of spreading the disease from dry, firm tracks are remote but those hikerstramping in boggy conditions could easily transfer the disease along with the mud which cakes on their boots.

You can tell other people about it. Only when citizens are aware of the fungus and the problems which it poses can proper precautions be taken against it.

Extracts from National Parks Service publication.

" THE FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB OF BALLARAT. 1952-1977"
published December 1977. 52 pages. Price \$1.

Copies available from the Secretary.